

Bayer Aspirin: The Wonder Drug
An Analysis of Sales and Marketing in the United States and Germany

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

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Abstract

The art of selling has existed since the B.C. era. The techniques have evolved throughout time, but the concept has remained the same over the centuries. Sales techniques can be tailored toward certain industries, such as the pharmaceutical industry. The analysis of the pharmaceutical industry, in both the United States and Germany, will show how sales representatives have different techniques in selling similar products. A further analysis of a specific company's product, Bayer Aspirin, a sustainable competitor in the pharmaceutical industry, will show how marketing and sales techniques are similar but different in both the United States in Germany.

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Author's Statement

The purpose of this piece is to dig deeper into the pharmaceutical world and discover how common household drugs have become so popular throughout the decades. The focus on pharmaceuticals represents the career field I would like to pursue after graduation; therefore a deeper understanding of the industry was gained from this research as well.

Bayer Aspirin: The Wonder Drug

An Analysis of Sales and Marketing in the United States and Germany

History of Sales

“Sales may be the world’s second oldest occupation, but a lot has changed since its early days. Sales has evolved from the simple act of bartering to the emergence of sales methodologies and intelligent tools.” (Bells, 2014).

The art of selling, or sales, is one of the oldest occupations in the world. The role of a salesperson has changed throughout the centuries, but the principle of selling a product to the consumer has existed from the beginning of bartering. Sales has evolved over time, though, from the way the products are sold in how they are marketed to the consumers. At first, products were sold without the consumers’ intentions involved. Blacksmiths, farmers, textile workers, etc. were only producing enough product for a local geography, but after the automation of production through steam and coal technology, this led to the hiring of salesmen. The reason for sales people then was to help the product reach more than the local geography, since the owners could not be everywhere at once to sell their products. During this period, there was no concern for the customer’s needs when selling the product because the sales techniques were used for distribution purposes more than persuasion purposes (Kleeman, 2013). Nowadays, sales is more focused on meeting the customers needs and persuading the consumer this product solves a problem they never knew they had.

Sales had several distinct phases of development throughout time, but especially over the course of the late 19th and 20th centuries. The industrial revolution in the 19th century caused a tremendous amount of exchange of goods between people and nations all over the world. This redefined sales, because meeting sales quotas defined success in sales. During the 1960s, sales

began to evolve again. The information age radically changed how selling was conducted, as well as the methods and attitudes toward selling. The strategic resources for businesses were information and customer relationships. The concept of adding value to the consumer became a successful tool of the selling process, which is still true for today (Dudovskiy, 2013).

With the evolution of sales, different sales processes emerged during the time periods as well. A sales process is very important to a successful sales person; it helps keep the sales person focused and provides the opportunity for more success. The sales process also helped business track predictable and systematic results for the sales department. Until 1960, the main technique of sales people was persuasion, since buyers were relatively unsophisticated and could have been easily manipulated towards making a purchase. During this time period, sales people followed a sales process called Seven Steps Selling. This process consisted of seven steps and was very powerful for sales people in this time.

As time progressed into the information age, Dale Carnegie developed a sales process by combining theories from the fields of psychology and process methodology. This sales process consisted of 5 steps that works best in retail and direct selling environments. This process put more emphasis on the effort from the sales person. The success of the sale would depend on their abilities in pushing sales. Now sales people were being compared to an artist with something innate that they were born with instead of a slick, pushy sales person. As the information era progressed, there were extraordinary developments in technology. These technological developments transformed the method of selling and the sales process over the years as well.

The sales approach shifted to a focus of customer relationship building, as opposed to persuasion. One of the most prominent processes of selling was introduced during this time, SPIN Selling, which laid the foundation for the modern based approach to sales. "The main idea

behind this method is that it is more important to understand the buyer's need than to persuade him/her into buying your product.” (Dudovskiy, 2013). This process enhanced a sales person's ability to develop a customer relationship while meeting a need that the consumer never knew they had to begin with. The evolution of sales processes shows that sales is constantly changing, but the sales person's ability and the need for sales people has always remained constant.

Selling is a worldwide profession. The different sales techniques and processes have been practiced all over the world. Each country can have different ways of approaching a sale, but overall the fundamentals of the processes are each the same. Analyzing two different countries for a specific product shows how fundamentals of sales are the same, but the culture influences how the products are sold.

Pharmaceutical Industry

Germany and the United States have a need for sales people, especially in the pharmaceutical industry. This industry discovers, develops, produces and markets drugs for uses as medications. The United States is the world's largest market for pharmaceuticals, with Europe in second place. Within Europe, Germany is the largest market in sales terms and one of the best performing industries within Germany in general (Infographic, 2014). Both countries conduct a majority of the world's research and development in the industry and are prominent in helping further the development of the biopharmaceutical and biologics industry as well. Therefore, with an industry this large in both countries, it increases the need for sales to ensure the products are getting out to the public.

The pharmaceutical industry is constantly changing and improving. It is important that each company within the industry has a strong research and development department, since

consumers are always looking for a new way to solve their medical needs. Drug discovery and development is very expensive since the drug has to be developed, tried and approved before marketed and sold in countries. In 2008, Germany increased their research-based pharmaceutical expenditures, which is what helped them become a large market for the industry today (Infographic, 2014). The United States continually invests in research and development in their largest drug companies to keep control over the 40% of the market they already hold.

Often large multinational corporations exhibit vertical integration, which is a popular business model. This includes participating in a broad range of drug development, manufacturing and quality control, marketing, sales, and distribution. As mentioned before, drug discovery and development is very expensive. Drug development starts with research and development, which is traditionally carried out by universities and research institutions. This process is very costly, because once the drug is developed, it needs to be approved in most nations before it can be marketed in those countries. This approval only comes after heavy investment in pre-clinical development and clinical trials. This process is very important to the success of the pharmaceutical company, because if a drug fails along the development or approval process, the company often incurs large costs while generating no revenue (Pharmaceutical Industry, 2015). Germany and the United States are able to afford the costs of the industry, because they each have successful companies that make enough profit to continuously fund research and development.

There are many companies that participate in the pharmaceutical industry, but only a small number of these are able to be successful and innovate new drugs. The U.S. and Germany have a few of these large companies in the countries, which contributes to why the industry is very prominent there. The sales and marketing techniques also contribute to the great success of

these companies. Once the drugs are successfully developed and approved, pharmaceutical sales representatives are employed to persuade doctors to prescribe their drugs to patients.

Pharmaceutical sales people are similar to all other sales people in regards to following the process of selling, but they are responsible for providing more details about the product. These sales representatives are also acquiring detailed personal information on doctors to help close the sale. This is because the representatives are under intense competitive pressure against other drug companies with similar products. Since the sales reps are selling similar products, they have to make themselves stand out instead of the product. Therefore, companies want to recruit the best sales people to represent their company to increase profits for their drug over other companies.

The pharmaceutical sales person has the most important job of educating the physicians on the new drug development. "The reps connect providers with the knowledge, drugs, and treatments they need to provide cutting-edge care to their patients. They also work to educate physicians, pharmacists, health care facilities and consumers about new pharmaceutical products" (Innerbody, 2014). Because of this, these sales reps must be extremely knowledgeable of their product. They must be able to describe its chemistry, method of action, side effects, and potential interactions with other drugs. This means that each rep specializes in a certain group or class of pharmaceuticals to ensure they are extremely knowledgeable to be more effective at promoting the company's product.

Both the United States and Germany pharmaceutical sales representatives follow the same format for how they sell the drugs to doctors. Sales is a universal concept across all nations, therefore the way the drugs are sold to doctors in the United States is similar to Germany. The work environment is similar, in the fact that most of the day is spent in

physician's offices selling the product. The job outlook for this industry in the United States and Germany is about the same at 10%.

The Affordable Care Act that passed in the U.S. caused a threat to the pharmaceutical industry because physicians who belong to a health care system are restricted in their prescribing behavior. These physicians must stick to tight guidelines when it comes to prescribing, so the pharmaceutical industry had a decline in job growth in the U.S. (MedReps, 2014). In Germany, job growth has been slowly increasing because of the cost-saving government policies that remain the largest barrier to future growth in the industry. The law, Arzneimittelmarkt-Neuordnungsgesetz, implemented the reorganization of the pharmaceutical industry aimed at slowing down the growing drug expenditure within the public health sector (Bayer, 2016). Each country has had trouble overcoming government regulations to increase job growth and growth of the company in general.

Overall, the pharmaceutical sales representatives have an important role for the drug companies. They are the gateway to increase awareness of the drug and increase sales for the company. The sales techniques are similar in both Germany and United States, and both countries have experienced a slower growth for the future due to government restrictions. One company, prevalent in both countries, can be further analyzed to understand the difference in sales and marketing between different countries.

History of Bayer

Bayer is a German multinational chemical and pharmaceutical company founded in Barmen, Germany in 1863 by two dye salesmen, Friedrich Bayer and Johann Friedrich Wescott. The company was originally founded to manufacture and sell synthetic dyestuffs, which opened

up a new field of business since the invention was still new. Between 1881 and 1913, the company developed into a chemical company with international operations. Bayer made continuous development of products a priority at the business's young age. Their research efforts gave rise to numerous dyes and pharmaceuticals, including Aspirin in 1899, "the drug of the century" (Bayer, 2016).

Bayer started making an international presence early in their business career. In 1865, Bayer appointed a sales representative for the United States, and by 1913, over 80 percent of revenues came from exports (Bayer, 2016). After economic troubles arose during World War 1 and World War 2, Bayer lost its foreign assets and revenues and had to reestablish its sales activities abroad. The United States was the first focus of these activities and by 1978, Bayer gained an important position in the U.S. pharmaceutical markets.

The United States was of great importance to Bayer, and it continued to increase. In 1994, Bayer acquired a company to operate in the U.S. under its own name. They also dedicated a facility in Connecticut to research and development for future products for Bayer (Bayer, 2016). This acquisition and movement into the United States made Bayer the world's biggest producer of raw materials for pharmaceuticals. Since then, Bayer has grown tremendously and produced some award-winning pharmaceutical drugs because of their dedication to research and development and continuous globalization.

Aspirin

Bayer developed many products throughout their lifetime, but Aspirin has been their most popular and well-known drug through the centuries. Aspirin is an acetylsalicylic acid used as medication to treat pain, fever, and inflammation. Other uses were discovered as well to

regain popularity for a widely used drug. Aspirin can also be used long-term to help prevent heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots to people of high risk. It may also decrease the risk of certain cancer and decrease the risk of death following a heart attack if given shortly after.

Aspirin is one of the most widely used medications globally and is listed on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines needed in a basic health system. The word *Aspirin* was Bayer's brand name, which was trademarked and patented at the development of the drug. However, Bayer lost the rights to the trademark name of Aspirin during World War 1, and therefore any pharmaceutical company producing replicates are able to sell it as Aspirin as well. After Bayer lost their rights, fierce competition broke out between drug companies as Aspirin's popularity grew (Aspirin, 2015).

Timeline of events: Aspirin – The road to success (Bayer, 2016):

- **1897:** In a Bayer laboratory in Wuppertal, Germany, young scientist Dr. Felix Hoffmann is the first to succeed in synthesizing a chemically pure and stable form of acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), which becomes the active ingredient in Aspirin™.
- **1899:** Aspirin™ is registered as a trademark. Just one year later, Bayer launches the analgesic in its classic tablet form – one of the first medicines to be marketed in this dosage form.
- **1909:** After just ten years, Bayer is already generating some 30 percent of its global sales with Aspirin™ in the United States (US). The brand becomes one of the ten most frequently prescribed medicines in the USA.
- **1915:** Aspirin™ becomes available without a prescription and becomes a best-seller in the USA.

- **1918:** World War I briefly brings the company's growth to a halt: The Treaty of Versailles forces Bayer to give up its patent in the USA. Everything, from money to the new Aspirin™ production plant, is seized.
- **1948:** Dr. Lawrence Craven, a California, US general practitioner, observes that the rate of heart attack is low in the several hundred patients for whom he has recommended acetylsalicylic acid.
- **1977:** A study reports that acetylsalicylic acid can prevent ischemic stroke. World Health Organization (WHO) introduces its "Essential Drug List". Aspirin™ is included right from the start as an essential analgesic.
- **1990:** The American Heart Association begins to recommend low-dose acetylsalicylic acid therapy to reduce risk of recurrent heart attack in patients with a history of this cardiovascular event.
- **1998:** The US Food and Drug Administration approves expanded cardiovascular professional labeling for acetylsalicylic acid use in secondary prevention. New indications now include use of acetylsalicylic acid as directed by a physician in: reducing the risk of death during a suspected heart attack; preventing a recurrent ischemic stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) in men *and* women; reducing the risk of recurrent heart attack and ischemic stroke; and preventing heart attack and death in patients with stable angina.
- **2012:** Bayer's global Aspirin™ business continues to exhibit significant sales performance and remains one of the company's top ten brands. Today, Aspirin™ is one of the top three branded over the counter analgesics worldwide.

Since its discovery, Aspirin has been referred to as the “wonder drug” or the “miracle drug.” One reason is because of the growing uses we have for it. Scientists are continuously studying and exploring the preventative effects Aspirin has on the human body. Another reason it is considered a wonder drug is because of its remarkable ability to fight cancer. Scientists are currently studying its effects on treating and preventing breast cancer in high-risk women, which could potentially save thousands of lives (Rogers, 2008).

Aspirin has many positive effects and ways to help the human body remain healthy, but there are potential side effects to taking Aspirin too often or in high dosage, as any drug would have. The most severe side effect to regular usage of Aspirin is gastrointestinal bleeding, which raises the risk of developing an ulcer (Whiteman, 2015). Often times, the effects of Aspirin to a person’s health often outweigh the risks associated, but there is still a risk that a potential side effect could occur. Even with the potential side effects, Aspirin remains one of the most popular drugs in the world. A drug developed in Germany has become an international sensation for pharmaceutical companies everywhere, but each country has different ways of selling and marketing the drug to the public. Since Bayer and the United States worked together in the globalization of the drug, these two countries will be compared to show the similarities and differences of the sales and marketing of Aspirin.

Sales and Marketing of Bayer

The profession of selling has moved into a universal process around the world, but each country sells and markets a product to the specific culture. This entices the society in that country to purchase the product because it was marketed specifically towards them. Once Aspirin was created, the product could sell itself anywhere without the need for salespeople. As

the product progressed through time and others were made similar to it, then came the need for sales and marketing personnel.

Germany and the United States have worked together through the success of Bayer Aspirin. Bayer patented the name Aspirin in Berlin in 1899 and then again in 1900, in the United States. At first, the drug was only sold in pharmacies and people needed a prescription to be able to obtain Aspirin, but its popularity continually rose. The pain relieving effects were considered a miracle to the public, and it was the only drug formula, at the time, to be pressed into tablet form. Its affordability also stood out to the public, making it more enticing for them to buy. At the beginning of Aspirin, marketing was very minimal (Bayer, 2016). In Germany, the factory was well-known and local, but a few advertisements appeared on automobiles in the 1920's. An example of this advertisement is featured below:



(Bayer, N.D.)

The car above features the Bayer Aspirin tablet on the back, while saying “Aspirin overcomes all sufferings.” This product was marketed to the public and promoted the pain

relieving effects of Aspirin. In the 1920s is when most of the advertisement, marketing, and sales for the product began. During World War 1, Bayer lost the patent for Aspirin, meaning other companies could replicate the drug and call it by the same name. Once Bayer recovered from this economic turmoil, they turned their efforts to sales and marketing their Aspirin to increase popularity for the drug once again.

After World War 1, the Weimar culture was prominent in Germany. The Weimar culture was the flourishing of the arts and sciences during the interwar period (after World War 1 and before World War 2). Berlin was the center of this period, being known for its leadership roles in science, the humanities, music, film, higher education, government, and much more (1920s Berlin, 2015). As the culture became more sophisticated and innovative, German companies had to reach this culture through shaping their advertisements. Products, such as Aspirin, could no longer sell themselves and had to promote their brand to increase public awareness again.

Germany was not the only country where the 1920's were flourishing. In the United States, the 1920's became a culture of consumerism. Advertising became popular as there was more circulation of magazines and newspapers. "Advertisers, now reaching millions of consumers on a daily basis, hired movie stars and sports figures to persuade Americans to buy all types of products. Business had become America's secular religion, thanks to advertising." (Eye Witness to History, 2000). Since Aspirin has always been popular in the United States, Bayer took advantage of the consumerism culture and focused their advertising there. Some examples of magazine advertisements that would appear are below:

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING
"HEAT-BEAT"
(TENSE, IRRITABLE, HEADACHY)



TAKE A **"BAYER BREAK!"**

How the **"BAYER BREAK"** makes you feel better fast!

1. First take two Bayer Aspirin for your headache.
2. Then, relax. Sit down... put your feet up and rest for a while.
3. This brief rest plus Bayer will take you feeling better fast, so you can face the heat with a smile. Try it.



BAYER BRINGS FASTEST RELIEF

Bayer-Tablets and Capsules of Aspirin



Made on the Banks of the Hudson River

The one genuine Aspirin is manufactured at the plant of The Bayer Company, Inc., at New York, on the Banks of the Hudson River. It has been made there since 1904. No other is genuine. That which is genuine possesses qualities of excellence never found in imitations.

For Your Protection

Bayer-Tablets and Capsules of Aspirin contain the genuine product and every package and every tablet is clearly and invariably marked with

"The Bayer Cross"  *Your Guarantee of Purity*

Reduce substitutes as they may prove ineffective and harmful. The trademark "Aspirin" (Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.) is a guarantee of authenticity of material and in made tablets. Beware of cheap imitations of the relative Bayer cross.



One Real Aspirin

Counterfeits and substitutes may be ineffective, and even harmful. Refuse them. Protect yourself by demanding

Bayer-Tablets of Aspirin

Every tablet and every package of genuine Aspirin bears

"The Bayer Cross"  *Your Guarantee of Purity*

Pocket Boxes of 12, Boxes of 24 and Bottles of 100
The trademark "Aspirin" (Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.) is a guarantee that the manufacturer has complied in these tablets with the highest Bayer standards.



ASPIRIN

SAY **"BAYER ASPIRIN"** and **INSIST!**

Proved safe by millions and prescribed by physicians for

Colds	Headache	Neuritis	Lumbago
Pain	Neuralgia	Toothache	Rheumatism

DOES NOT AFFECT THE HEART

Safe → Accept only **"Bayer" package** which contains proven directions. Handy **"Bayer"** boxes of 12 tablets. Also bottles of 24 and 100—Druggists.

Aspirin is the trade name of Bayer Manufacturing of Monmouth-Nebraska at Baltimore

(Bayer, N.D.)

The first advertisement shows the pain relieving effects of Aspirin. A woman with an obvious headache is shown, but after she takes Aspirin she is feeling better than ever. The advertisement also describes how it makes you feel better. The second advertisement promotes Bayer through the nationalism effect. The ad shows that Aspirin is made in the United States as well, which in the 1920s was a great marketing technique since the United States was a proud country in that time. The third advertisement makes Bayer's brand stand out against the others, saying the "one real Aspirin" since Aspirin was being replicated by other pharmaceutical

companies. Lastly, the fourth advertisement promotes the safety of Aspirin and that Bayer is the only brand that has safe Aspirin.

These advertisements are just a few of many that circulated throughout the United States. While the German market was still a focus for Bayer, the culture in the United States was more susceptible to advertising than the German culture because of the outcome of World War 1. Aspirin continued its success as the “wonder drug” for 50 more years, but as time progressed, the popularity for the drug decreased, especially in the United States. Bayer continued their research and development for the product, since there was so much they did not know about the pain reliever. This continuous research led to Aspirin’s second “career” in 1980 (Bayer, 2016).

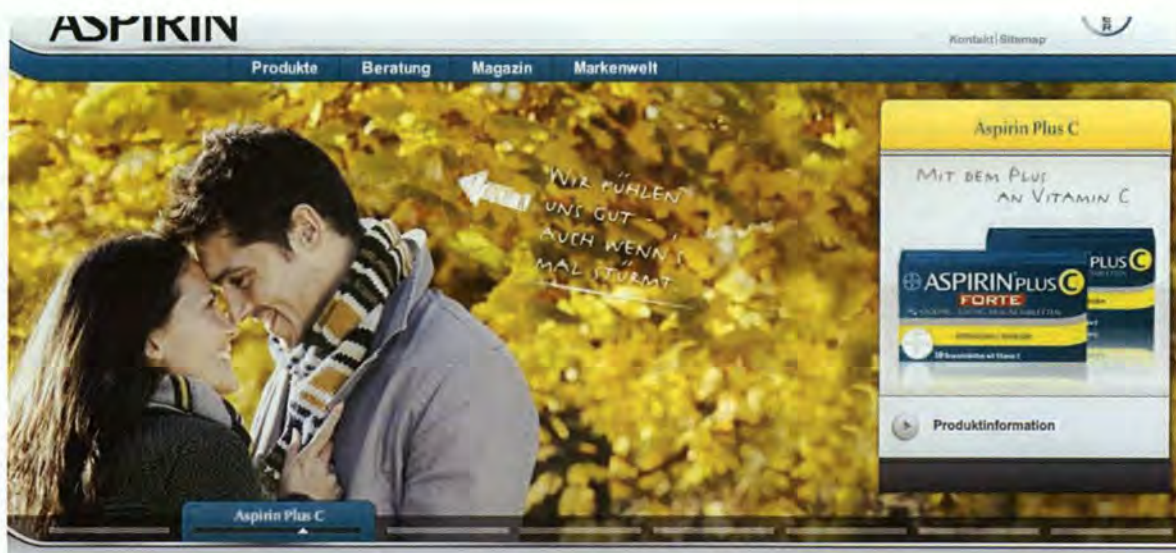
Scientists began to learn about Aspirin’s other uses, such as reducing the risk of death after a heart attack and a blood thinner for blood clots. This increased the popularity for the drug, but these new uses for Aspirin had to be advertised and sold. The drug was not only marketed for its pain relieving effects, but also its other effects on the human body. An example of this advertising is seen below:



(Ads of the World, 2014)

This advertisement purely promotes Aspirin's preventative effect for heart attacks. It also shows Bayer's slogan "Expect Wonders" because it is known as the wonder drug. Bayer offers similar advertisements in Germany, but there was more focus on advertising in the United States. Now that Aspirin is still one of the world's most popular drugs, they have less focus on marketing and more focus on ensuring Bayer is a reputable company.

Since the headquarters of Bayer is in Germany, sales are higher in Europe because of the increased presence of Bayer in this region. Majority of their employees are based in Germany because of the large facility located there as well. Having the presence of their brand in the home country gives the public a sense of nationalism and they are proud to be using their German-based product. Not much advertisement is needed, since Bayer is a widely known product, especially with 36,700 employees working in Germany alone (Bayer, N.D.). Therefore, advertisements for the product are limited, and most of the profits from sales goes into research and development of future products and researching the wonder drug itself. Online, Bayer advertises Aspirin on their website; some examples of these are seen below:



“Wir fühlen uns gut auch wenn's mal stürmt” – We feel good even when it storms (Ads of the World, 2014).



“Die Aspirin Tablette schnell wie nie dank Mikroaktiv-Technologie” – The Aspirin tablet is fast as ever thanks to micro-technology (Ads of the World, 2014).

These advertisements are just a couple of many featured on Bayer’s websites. Bayer continuously promotes Aspirin, especially the many different forms. Aspirin is extremely popular throughout German society; so advertising techniques are more focused towards the different Aspirin products available. In the first advertisement, Aspirin plus vitamin C is promoted, while in the second advertisement, the Aspirin tablets are promoted. The United States seems to have a different marketing and sales strategy, contrary to the way Bayer advertises Aspirin in Germany/Europe.

As mentioned before, Bayer took advantage of the consumerism in the 1920s through many advertisements of Aspirin and other products in the United States. Today, the culture has shifted to a more health conscious society, which Bayer also took advantage of. Not only does

Bayer advertise Aspirin for pain relieving effects, but also for relieving and preventing other symptoms. This increased popularity for the drug and it remains popular to this day. A few examples of the advertisement of the pain relieving headache remedy and other uses are seen below:





(Ads of the World, 2014)

These advertisements show the different pain relieving effects that Aspirin has besides the well-known headache remedy. Although Bayer advertises in the United States, they only focus on the traditional Aspirin, as opposed to the different Aspirin products that they advertise in Germany. This is because there are numerous companies that sell Aspirin and as long as Bayer gets their brand name publicized, consumers will become brand loyal and select their other Aspirin products in the future. In Germany, Bayer already created the brand loyal consumers through having a home market, therefore their focus is promoting other Aspirin products.

Conclusion

Sales and marketing has changed over many years, but it seems to be universal between countries. Pharmaceutical sales became popular as more drug companies and drugs were developed, but one company continued to remain on top throughout the industry – Bayer. Bayer

started off as a successful company from their creation of the wonder drug Aspirin and their immediate international presence as early as 1900. This created a rise in popularity for the drug throughout the world.

As time progressed, Bayer began targeting their advertisements for Bayer Aspirin toward the specific culture. This increased sales for the company as popularity continued to rise for each culture. Bayer continually focused their research toward developing and improving Aspirin as well since that was their most well-known product. These efforts lead to more uses for Aspirin, which brought the drug back into the public eye. Their advertising efforts showed these alternate uses and Bayer Aspirin continued to be a top selling drug around the world. Overall, Bayer Aspirin is a role model to other drug companies since this drug has had increased success through 115 years, and continues to be successful.

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